



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE SCHOOL REVIEW

A JOURNAL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

VOLUME V
NUMBER 9

NOVEMBER, 1897

WHOLE
NUMBER 49

CÆSAR AS A TEXT-BOOK

INTRODUCTION

THE propriety of retaining Cæsar in the secondary schools has been frequently questioned. In the brief courses which the average programme affords, the Gallic War occupies a large space and it is perhaps not surprising that teachers should find it somewhat wearisome to spend so long a time on one book. In various educational meetings of late this feeling has found expression in sharp criticisms not only upon the amount of time spent upon Cæsar, but also upon the pedagogic value of the book. Thus it has been declared that the subject-matter is uninteresting to teacher and pupils alike, and that inasmuch as the Gallic War is but the history of a war of conquest in which acts of cruelty and injustice are ever recurring incidents, the work may even have a demoralizing tendency. It is easy to allow one's judgments to be affected by the opinions of others and it is perhaps to be feared that these attacks by men of eminence in the educational world may have tempted some teachers to ignore too readily the preëminent merits of Cæsar's works as an educational instrument.

Many of the current arguments against the value of Cæsar as a text-book would seem to owe their force to the fact that the Gallic War is usually read too early in the course, before the

pupil is adequately equipped for the study of so difficult an author. Other criticisms seem to be explained by the fact that some of our teachers have failed to appreciate and, therefore, fully to utilize the material which the work affords them. A defective method, however, in presenting Cæsar is surely not sufficient to justify us in banishing him from the preparatory school, if it can be shown that he not only possesses extraordinary value as a disciplinary instrument, but affords also a unique opportunity for presenting to the pupil the spectacle of Rome as a conquering and organizing power—a lesson which he must learn if he is to understand the history of modern Europe. It may not, therefore, be inopportune to consider here the grounds on which one can claim for “Cæsar’s Commentaries on the Gallic War” a prominent place in our school programmes. This is a subject that we find debated in educational literature early in the century, but the writer knows no discussion of the question which, taking nothing for granted, covers the ground so completely as an article, “Cäsar als Schulbuch,” by A. Wagler, which appeared in July 1857, in the *Zeitschrift für das Gymnasialwesen*, pp. 481–503. Wagler’s treatment of the subject is so thoroughgoing, that in spite of the fact that he was considering the question in relation to the German Gymnasium, in which since that time the scope of the work in the classics has been considerably restricted, his paper, nevertheless, contains little that is inappropriate to the discussion here. It has seemed best, therefore, to present in the following pages a translation of this article, omitting only the great part of the footnotes and a few portions of the text, where condensation seemed possible without detriment to the argument.

CÆSAR AS A TEXT-BOOK

Among the educational instruments of the gymnasium, the Greek and Latin classics occupy the first place. A critical examination of these with reference to their subject-matter and form cannot fail to be welcome, especially in a period of earnest pedagogic strife wherein the one party would, so far as possible, throw overboard as unnecessary ballast the entire system of

classical education, with all the Greek and Latin authors; while the other party would restore, at least so far as the gymnasium is concerned, their former exclusive sway. Only by such an examination is it possible to reach an unpartisan and just judgment concerning the ancient classics.

It is not sufficient, however for our purpose to pronounce this or that opinion concerning the pedagogic worth or worthlessness of a book and to support this opinion by certain more or less plausible reasons; what we need is to reach a reliable conclusion, based upon sound principles. Before we proceed, therefore, to a closer examination of Cæsar, we must seek first to provide ourselves with a standard of criticism by bringing together the qualities which we require of a schoolbook, or, to be specific, of an historian who is suitable for school use. One might very briefly make a comprehensive statement of the qualities by saying that what is necessary is appropriate matter in an appropriate form; but not much would be gained thereby, for we should have to proceed immediately to define what we mean by "appropriate," and in defining this idea we should find that we must apply, not an absolute, but merely a relative standard; *i. e.*, we should be compelled to consider not merely the subject by itself, but also at the same time to take into account the grade and the needs of those by whom each particular book is to be used. Now, in general, in regard to subject-matter, an historian may be described as appropriate if he

First, treats a period of importance in general history; *i. e.*, if he deals with events or personalities that have had important influence upon the world's history; and if

Secondly, he unfolds before us not merely a faithful and accurate, but also a lively and diversified picture of this time, of these personalities and events.

The form will deserve to be described as appropriate if conception, setting, and diction, are clear, simple, noble, and suited to the young or to a particular period of youth.

After these prefatory remarks, we proceed to the consideration of the book named above. That Cæsar Commentaries trans-

port us into an important period of the world's history and into the midst of events that had important influences on the course of history, is a statement that probably needs no proof. Few other wars have contributed so much as Cæsar's to transform the destinies of our portion of the earth ; indeed, of the whole world. The Roman people was the most powerful of all antiquity, and in Cæsar's time it stood at the summit of its power and greatness. This period of Roman history has, however, a twofold significance, inasmuch as it marks, on the one hand, the highest point of Rome's universal dominion, and, on the other hand, the commencement of the period of decline. For while her legions, still everywhere victorious, smite down the foes without, within there already appear signs of the ruin to which the Roman world is destined to fall a victim in order to make way for a new world, the Christianized German, into whose hands the sovereignty of the world should pass. Both aspects of this transition period we see represented also in Cæsar's writings, the one in the Gallic War, the other in the Civil War, which affords us a glimpse into the already diseased organism of the gigantic body.

The most momentous epoch, however, in the life of Cæsar is undoubtedly that of the Gallic Wars. They are of moment, not only as affecting Cæsar himself and the Roman Empire (inasmuch as for him they prepared the way to sole dominion, and with reference to the empire, entailed the downfall of the republican constitution), but principally because of their later and indirect consequences, inasmuch as the conquest and complete Romanizing of Gaul had a most powerful influence upon the form and destinies of western and central Europe. Roman dominion in the course of four centuries took such deep root in Gaul that all the subsequent revolutions have availed merely to modify it ; choke it or annihilate it they could not. While in modern France the Keltic race which originally possessed the principal part of Gaul has with the exception of a few remnants disappeared, and while the Germanic elements which gained ascendancy after the Romans seem almost completely to have disappeared, Neo-Latinism has not only persisted, but in a cer-

tain sense has recovered its lost ascendancy. It was in Gaul that already in the ninth century the throne of the Cæsars was again set up, and thence Christendom united with Roman civilization, extended itself over central and northern Europe. *The history of the entire Middle Ages and of the later period down to the present time bears testimony so clearly to the historic importance of these wars that we may doubtless concede that the Gallic War satisfies the first requirement which we proposed.*

But is the picture itself which is unrolled before our gaze one that is worthy of its great subject-matter? Is it not merely faithful and accurate in regard to historic facts, but also lively, rich, and distinct in details? The circumstance that the Gallic Wars are related by Cæsar himself, who, standing at the center of action, commanded a complete survey of the whole field, must also on this account excite a favorable presumption for the book, and this presumption will be substantially justified by a closer examination of the work. Setting aside for the moment a subject to which we shall recur briefly, namely, the question of the historic truth of the account, we wish for the present merely to call attention to the richness of these pictures of war and the value which they thereby gain for the understanding of history and for the lively perception of historic relations and conditions.

The Gallic War is usually read in the middle grade of the gymnasium. In his history the pupil has already become acquainted with the most important periods of Roman history. He has seen how Rome from a small beginning grew to be the mistress of the world; how she brought city after city, people after people, country after country beneath the sway of her scepter. He has read much and heard much of Roman military discipline and courage, of the battles and victories of the Romans by land and sea; but all these things have not yet been immediately presented to him; he has as yet had no opportunity to make a closer acquaintance with this remarkable people. Here, however, in the Gallic War he is transported into the bustle and movement of a Roman war of conquest, and one,

moreover, of the vastest that the Romans ever undertook. The proud legions of whom he has heard so much now appear, as it were, bodily before his eye. He accompanies them upon all their marches, beholds them crossing rivers and streams, constructing bridges, building ships, throwing up entrenchments, besieging and storming cities. He witnesses their endurance, their struggles, their victories. In this way he learns many important facts in a certain sense by personal observation. Among these is, first and most important of all, the entire military system of the Romans with everything connected with it. The beginner becomes acquainted here with the various constituent parts and divisions of the Roman army, their organization, weapons, and use. He learns, besides the various formations employed in battle and on the march, all the processes of fortification and of siege work pertaining both to the means of attack and of defense, the camp life and the arrangement of the camp, the commissariat, and the system of payment, as well as the organization of the baggage and transportation corps, and much else which it would take too long to enumerate. The knowledge of these things is the more important for the boy, because he thereby becomes acquainted essentially with the entire military system of antiquity, and, indeed, with the most important elements of the military art of all periods and of all peoples. Also concerning naval warfare, the building and equipment of ships, concerning the different kinds of vessels and their employment, concerning the embarking, the transportation by sea, and the landing of an army he gets in many passages valuable information.¹ Just as we become acquainted with the military system of the Romans, so also we learn that of their opponents, the Gauls, the Germans, the Britons, and because of their peculiarity many of these details are of great interest to boys.² Cæsar gives us also many interesting glimpses of other institutions, customs, and usages, of the religious ideas

¹ *Cf.*, III, 9 ff.; IV, 20 ff.; V, 1-23.

² *Cf.*, I, 26, 48, 51, 52 ff.; II, 6 ff., 10, 11, 19 ff., 30 ff.; III, 4, 12 ff., 18, 19, 28, 29; IV, 1, 12, 24, 33; V, 14 ff., 21, 34 ff., 42 ff., 51 ff.; VI, 8 ff., 15, 23, 35 ff.; VII, 22-25, 71 ff.

and worship, and of the manner of life and origin of these peoples, as well as of the character of their land and of their dwellings.¹

The Gallic War affords us further a very instructive glimpse into the policy of the Romans and into those methods which in their wars of conquest they used to employ as an aid to the force of arms. We see here by an actual example, how cunningly and quickly they prepared the way for the subjugation of the country upon which they had fixed their eye; how at first and long before the actual attack they sought to break its power of resistance by meddling in its internal affairs, by alliances with individual tribes or princes against others of the same race, by exciting and promoting internal dissensions and by the cunning employment of all the ensuing complications;—how they then gradually allowed the mask to fall and began with ever increasing insistence to play the part of master; with what strength and quickness they now at last completely prostrated their victim, while his every attempt to free himself they punished with the utmost severity; sometimes indeed with inhuman cruelty,² as high treason and insurrection against their lawful sovereignty, and how within the iron embrace of their legions the convulsive efforts at resistance grew ever weaker, until finally there ensued the quiet of complete servitude, which, nevertheless, in the course of time was wont to assume the gentler aspect of a peaceful assimilation of the foreign element.

In the Gallic War, moreover, we gain information concerning the relation which the allied, as well as the subjugated, peoples sustained to the Romans and concerning the duties and services which they were pledged to render to their conquerers. We see how the conquered and those also who had voluntarily submitted not only had to send hostages as a pledge of their faithfulness and obedience, but were also compelled to provide the Romans grain supplies and auxiliary troops, particularly cavalry.

¹ Cf., I, 1, 3 ff., 6, 17, 18, 29 ff., 34 ff., 47, 50; II, 1, 4ff., 13, 15, 17, 28–31; III, 8–10, 12, 13, 18–22; IV, 5, 13, 20, 27; V, 3, 6 ff., 12–15, 25 ff., 56; VI, 11–28, 30; VII, 2, 3, 21–24, 40, 42, 48, 50, 55, 56.

² Cf. V, 7; VII, 28; VIII, 44.

We see their princes compelled to attend Cæsar upon his campaigns and to hold themselves continually subject to his orders. He treats them entirely as inferiors and frequently subjects them to a severe examination, administering censure or punishment, or praising and encouraging them. Those whose allegiance he suspects he surrounds with spies and eavesdroppers and even takes abroad with him as prisoners and treats their refusal to follow him as high treason.¹ Independent princes, and tribes they sought to win over and attach to themselves by titles of honor or even by gifts.² These *amici et socii* or *fratres et consanguinei populi Romani*, as the Romans were fond of calling their faithful allies, enjoyed also special protection, and their services, which were frequently onerous, were rewarded at the expense of the common foe, or else they were consoled with prospect of future rewards.³ Whenever, as frequently occurred in Gaul, two factions, one Roman and the other anti-Roman, or national, contended for supremacy in the same state, the former was sure to receive vigorous support from Cæsar and he never rested till his party had gained the upper hand and men friendly to himself were at the head of the state.⁴ In many places there occur, sometimes casual references, sometimes detailed information concerning the mutual relations of the different Gallic tribes, of whom the more powerful exercise a sort of hegemony over the weaker, as well as statements concerning their relations to the Germans and Britons, of whom the former especially play a great rôle in the Gallic War, now as an object of terror to the Gauls, and again as their powerful and ever-ready confederates against the Romans.⁵

¹ I, 16, 18 ff., 20, 31, ff.; V, 3, 4, 5-7, 26, ff., 54; VII, 37, 40.

² I, 3, 33, 35, 36, 42-44; IV, 12; VII, 31, etc.

³ Cf. I, 14, ff., 35, ff., 43, 45; IV, 16; VI, 12; VII, 34, 54.

Populi Romani hanc esse consuetudinem, says Cæsar to Ariovistus, *ut socios atque amicos non modo sui nihil deperdere, sed gratia, dignitate, honore, auctiores velit esse*. In fact Cæsar could hardly have expressed more accurately the principles by which in their foreign policy the Romans regularly practiced corruption and by means of which hardly less than by means of the sword they became so great and powerful.

⁴ Cf. I, 18 ff.; V, 3, 25, 56 ff.; VI, 4 ff., 8, 44; VII, 32, 33.

⁵ Cf. I, 9, 31 ff., 36 ff., 43 ff.; II, 3, 4, 14, 29, 39; III, 8, 9; IV, 1 ff., 20, 21; V, 3, 27; VI, 2, 3, 5, 11 ff.; VII, 15, 20, 63, 75, 77, 89.

Thus a boy can learn very much from Cæsar; he can derive from him information and views which will be of great service to him for the understanding not only of Roman history, but of history in general. But we must at this point notice an objection which is raised against the Gallic War party in this very regard. It is maintained, namely, that the book is not suitable reading for the young just on this account, because it carries the reader too far into political relations, military history, and subjects such as these, for which the boy has not yet developed a liking.¹ It is easy to see that, if the objection is put in this form, its entire force consists in the one little word *too* and so, that as long as we neglect to establish a definite line of division between what is too far and what is just far enough, it is impossible, strictly speaking, either to refute the objection or to concede its force. For no one will deny that for a vivid conception of history an introduction into details of military history and even of political relations is all important. And just as in everything else, so also in this subject it is true that *an exact acquaintance, a making one's self at home, as it were, in a small territory, is more valuable and more fruitful than a superficial acquaintance with a large and varied field.*

More serious in import than the above is another objection that is made against the use of the Gallic War as a school book, an objection likewise derived from the subject-matter. It is maintained that these commentaries, by the uniformity of their subject-matter and the constant repetition of the same things, must prove wearisome to the pupil. There is a constant marching to and fro, now against this tribe, now against that, but everywhere there is essentially the same spectacle: a laying waste of the country, burning of villages, storming and plundering of cities, marchings, isolated skirmishes, a decisive battle, flight and massacre of the foe, and finally submission and the giving of hostages, etc. This objection is not without foundation. A certain degree of uniformity is exhibited externally in

¹ With what justice military history is reckoned among the subjects in which boys have no interest it is hard to understand.

the frequent recurrence of the same expressions and phrases;¹ and it lay also in the nature of the case and in the kind of war which Cæsar had to conduct in Gaul that a certain similarity in events should recur. But the case is far from being so bad as it seems. The uniformity is rather verbal than real, consisting in certain accessories and externals rather than in the essentials. For, if we examine the contents of the separate books more closely, we shall find therein the utmost diversity. This diversity appears:

First, in the frequent change in the scene of war. We mean not merely the change in the countries (Gaul, Germany, and Britain), but particularly the change in the localities. At one moment it is the valleys of the Alps or the regions about Lake Geneva and the Rhone; at another, it is Brittany or Normandy and the Atlantic coast; now it is the vast plains of Aquitania, and now again it is the marshy and wooded lowland near the lower Rhine and the Meuse.

Second, in the varying character of the peoples against whom the wars are waged, in the varying course of these campaigns themselves, and in the variety of the situations in which the Romans find themselves. At one time it is a campaign by land, at another time it is by sea (or both combined); now the Romans are struggling against the fearful battle hordes of the Germans, now against the fleet hosts of the Britons, who charge down upon them in their chariots, and now again against the impetuous fury and treachery of the Gallic races. At one moment it is a struggle to beat back assailing foes, at another to quell insurrections arising in the interior of Gaul, and again at another to

¹ Thus in connection with the preparations for a campaign (*frumentum comportare* or *rem frumentariam providere, loca perspicere, equitatum praemittere, cum legionibus subsequi*, etc. So, too, in relating the further operations: *Adventu eius cognito hostes . . . , milia passuum progredi, locum castris idoneum deligere, castra munire, copias e castris educere, triplici acie instructa ad h. contendere, milites adhortari, signo dato proelium committere*, etc., etc.). The battles can also for the most part all be reduced to two classes: either in consequence of the frightful volley of pikes the enemy turn in flight at the first encounter with the legions (*primo impetu terga vertere* or *in fugam conici*, or they offer stubborn resistance. But even in the latter case the course of the battle does not exhibit much diversity.

chastise hostile neighbors and prepare the way for their subjection. We see the legions doing battle, at one moment united in greater masses, at another dispersed in various regions. Now it is a struggle against separate powerful tribes, now against greater confederacies. The scene shifts from the open field of battle to the wearisome sieges, in which the Romans play the part now of besiegers and now of besieged (or, as in Alesia, the part of both at once). Victories alternate with defeats; on the one hand the art of war, on the other despair contrives ever to find other and new means of attack or defense, and thereby to give a new and unexpected turn to the course of combat. This diversity appears further.

Third, in the fact that in the course of these campaigns the attention of the reader is directed at one time rather to the entire scene, while at another there appear in the foreground individual characters of importance who claim our interest in an extraordinary degree. To this class belong, for example, Ariovistus, Dumnorix, Cingetorix, Vercingetorix, Indutiomarus, Divitiacus, etc., and upon the side of the Romans, besides Cæsar himself, men like Labienus, Servius Galba, Q. T. Sabinus, and L. Aurunculeius Cotta, Q. Cicero, and P. Crassus.

Fourth, in the little episodes that are interwoven here and there in the narrative and the individual traits of personal courage, which contribute much to enliven the whole.¹ To this we add.

Fifth, the manifold accounts and descriptions of countries and peoples, of their customs and institutions. (*Cf. supra.*)

To illustrate all this in detail would take too long. We must confine ourselves to a few examples, and this we can the better do, inasmuch as the reader is sufficiently familiar with the text of Cæsar.

Thoroughly interesting and diversified is the first book containing the war against the Helvetians, and the account of Ariovistus. In the first part there is presented to the boy a very lively and vivid picture of a small tribal migration as a kind

¹ Cf. IV, 12, 25; V, 37, 43, 44; VI, 38, etc.

of prelude to the mighty movements which some centuries later changed the face of all Europe. In the second part of the book he makes his first nearer acquaintance with his own ancestors, the rough and defiant Germans, who dispute with Cæsar the possession of the fair land of Gaul, to which they claim as much, if not more right than, the Romans. How masterly in all its simplicity is the description of Ariovistus himself, a description which surely no boy can read without intense interest and sympathy. How proud and defiant, and withal how cunning does he appear before Cæsar, and how overpowering is the awe which he has managed to make the subjugated Gauls feel for him ! Compare in particular the speech of the Æduan Divitiacus (I, 31), who sketches for us a very lively picture of that *homo barbarus, iracundus, temerarius*, before whose anger the Gallic tribes tremble, and who punished with unheard of cruelty the slightest resistance. "If Rome will not provide relief," says Divitiacus, "all the Gauls will be compelled to follow the example of the Helvetians, *ut domo emigrent, aliud domicilium, alias sedes, remotas a Germanis petant fortunamque, quaecumque accadat, experiantur.*" And then how significant, immediately after, is the demeanor of the Sequani, in whose land the defiant foreigners have made their abode, and who were doomed most bitterly to experience the cruelty of Ariovistus, whom they themselves had invited thither. All the Gallic princes had, with tears, entreated Cæsar for protection against their oppressor; only the Sequani are silent and stand with hanging heads, their gaze riveted upon the ground. In vain does Cæsar seek to learn from them themselves the cause of this strange behavior. Not a word can he extract from them. Finally we get from Divitiacus full information. The fate of the Sequani, he says, is most melancholy, *quod soli ne in occulto quidem queri neque auxilium implorare auderent absentisque Ariovisti crudelitatem velutsi coram adesset horrerent.* That is the picture of him which is presented to us even before the appearance of the man himself. At first, therefore, Cæsar is very cautious in his intercourse with Ariovistus. He sends envoys to him with the request, *uti aliquem locum medium utriusque conloquio*

deligeret ; velle sese de republica et summis utriusque rebus cum eo agere. Ariovistus replies to him somewhat unmannerly : *Si quid ipsi a Caesare opus esset, sese ad eum venturum fuisse ; si quid ille se velit, illum ad se venire oportere.* He adds at the close : *Sibi autem mirum videri, quid in sua Gallia, quam bello vicisset, aut Caesari aut omnino populo Romano negotii esset.* Hardly more impolite was the answer which he returned later to the abrupt demands of Cæsar, whose patience was at last beginning to fail. Cæsar, as is well known, had demanded of him that he should permit no more Germans to cross the Rhine into Gaul, that he should restore the hostages of the Ædui and the Sequani, and finally that in future he should not in any way molest the allies of the Roman people. To this he had added the threat that if Ariovistus should not comply with his demands, he would take the matter into his own hands and undertake to protect the allies of the Roman people against the violence of the Germans. Ariovistus, thereupon, replied to him : *“Jus esse belli, ut, qui vicissent, iis, quos vicissent, quem ad modum vellent, imperarent : item populum Romanum victis non ad alterius præscriptum, sed ad suum arbitrium imperare consuesse. Si ipse populo Romano non præscriberet, quem ad modum suo iure uteretur, non oportere se a populo Romano in suo iure impediri. Haeduos sibi, quoniam belli fortunam temptassent et armis congressi ac superati essent, stipendarios esse factos.* He would not give back their hostages, nor would he, on the other hand, commence any unjust war against them or their allies, so long as they faithfully fulfilled their obligations to him and did not refuse to pay their annual tribute. If, however, they should not do this, then the fraternal relation which they had with the Roman people would avail them naught. In fact, such language was not unbecoming to the prince of a people whose descendants were destined to overthrow the mighty Roman Empire.

The second book is not so rich in interesting details, but it gives us further information concerning the internal affairs of Gaul, especially concerning the Belgian tribes of the northeast, whose names are to this day recognizable in those of certain old

cities (Soissons from the *Suessiones*, Amiens from the *Ambiani*, Beauvais from the *Bellovaci*, Rheims from the *Remi*, Treves from the *Treviri*). Finally, mention should here be made of the war against the Nervii (chs. 16-28) and especially the siege of the capital of the Aduatuci (chs. 29-33). After the Romans had invested this unusually strong town, which lay upon an eminence, and had surrounded it with siege work and were now making ready to erect a tower at some distance from it, the besieged began to mock from the wall and utter derisive cries, *quod tanta machinatio a tanto spatio instrueretur: quibusnam manibus aut quibus viribus praesertim homines tautulae staturae (nam plerumque hominibus Gallis prae magnitudine corporum suorum brevitudo nostra contemptui est) tanti oneris turrim moturos esse confiderent?* But when they saw the tower suddenly begin to move and to approach the city, then all at once their courage forsook them and they proffered submission. The Romans must, they said, be in alliance with the gods. *Non se existimare, Romanos sine ope divina bellum gerere, qui tantae altitudinis machinationes tanta celeritate promovere possent.*

The third book contains several little war pictures entirely different from the former ones and yet very attractive. Thus at the very beginning there is the account of Galba's struggle against the Alpine tribes in the Rhone valley. Galba has been sent into this region with one legion and a division of the cavalry, in order to open and guard the Alpine passes between Italy and Switzerland. He has already gained some victories, taken and destroyed several strongholds and so compelled the mountain tribes to submit and give hostages. In order to secure the advantages he has gained, he decides to pass the winter in the Rome valley. Here lay, shut in by high mountains and divided into halves by the Rhone, the city or village of Octodurus, inhabited by the Veragri. This is the place Galba chooses for his winter quarters. The Veragri are compelled to surrender to him the half of the village on this side of the stream, while the row of houses on the opposite side is left to them. By means of a wall and moat the Roman side is converted into a com-

pletely fortified camp, and Galba begins to make his arrangements for the winter and to procure provisions from the neighborhood. Then suddenly, one morning, the scouts bring him word, *ex ea parte vici quam Gallis concesserat, omnes noctu discessisse montesque, qui impenderent, a maxima multitudine Sedunorum et Veragrorum teneri*. The purpose of the Gauls could not long be concealed. The legion is in a position of the greatest peril, inasmuch as the fortifications of the camp are not yet fully completed and also the necessary supplies of grain are not at hand; moreover, the legion has been weakened by the withdrawal of two cohorts. A council of war is called to devise means of safety. Great is the consternation. Some are ready to abandon all hope of rescue, and advise ignominious flight. *Prope iam desperata salute nonnullae huius modi sententiae dicebantur, ut impedimentis relictis eruptione facta isdem itineribus, quibus eo pervenisent, ad salutem contenderent*. The sober minded, however maintain the ascendancy. *Maiori tamen placuit, hoc reservato ad extremum casum consilio interim rei eventum experiri et castra defendere*. Hardly is there time to issue the necessary orders for the reception of the enemy when the foe, rushing down from the mountains, rain down upon the Romans who man the walls, a storm of stones and spears. The handful of Romans holds out bravely, but the superior strength of the assailants is too great. The battle has already continued six hours without intermission, the Romans have used up all their missiles, and are utterly exhausted; their resistance is continually becoming weaker, while the Gauls are already beginning to lay hold of the breastworks and to fill up the moat. Finally Galba, acting on the advice of two of his bravest captains decides upon a desperate expedient, which is immediately employed with most brilliant success. The Roman soldiers are ordered for a time to desist wholly from battle and to act merely upon the defensive, in order to gain new strength (*tantummodo tela missa exciperent seque ex labore reficerent*.) Then suddenly at a given signal, trusting to their individual bravery, sword in hand, they are to seek to cut their way through the enemy. This is done, and a complete rout of their surprised

assailants is the result of the spirited sortie of the Romans. Galba, however, does not think it advisable to expose himself to a second surprise of this sort, therefore, after reducing the village of Octodurus to ashes, he marches southward across the Valais Alps and reaches the soil of the friendly Allobroges.

Very interesting, further, is the campaign against the Veneti and their confederates, which comprises a large part of the book (chs. 7-17), and again unfolds before the reader entirely new and peculiar scenery and pictures, which we cannot now discuss in greater detail. Also the contemporaneous campaign of Crassus in the plains of Aquitania, where already before Cæsar's time several Roman armies had suffered defeats, will be read by the pupils not without interest.

At the beginning of the fourth book there appear again two German tribes, the Usipites and the Tencteri, at the Rhine. By means of a stratagem they effect a crossing, and, invited thereto by the Gauls themselves, they penetrate deep into the interior of the country. Before their encounter with the Romans who quickly hasten in their direction, they send envoys to Cæsar and announce that while they would not indeed attack the Romans, they would not shun an engagement if attacked—*quod Germanorum consuetudo sit a maioribus tradita, quicumque bellum inferant, resistere nec deprecari*—and in order to inspire the Romans in advance with an exalted idea of their courage, they added, immediately, that the Suebi were the only race with whom they could not match themselves in conflict; with the Suebi, however, even the immortal gods could not cope. But, excepting these, there was no race upon the face of the earth whom they could not overcome. Here, also, the final outcome of the conflict does not justify this proud language, inasmuch as the Germans suffer a fearful defeat, yet on this occasion Cæsar stains his reputation by an act of faithlessness which even the Romans could not pardon.^{*}

This book contains besides an account of Cæsar's first crossing of the Rhine, with the well-known chapters concerning the

^{*} Cf. Sueton., *Cæs.* ch. 24.

building of the bridge, and of the preliminary expedition to Britain.¹

The second and more important expedition against the Britons, undertaken with considerable forces, follows at the beginning of the fifth book. This section contains much that is interesting, especially a description of the country and its inhabitants, in which, indeed, there appears much that is strange. This, however, is not greatly to be wondered at, when we consider how brief and superficial was Cæsar's acquaintance with the country.²

But especially deserving of prominence in this book is the following section (chs. 26–52), which deals with Ambiorix and his undertakings. It is divided into two heads. First, the destruction of Q. Titurius Sabinus and L. Aurunculeius Cotta with one and a half legions (chs. 26–37), and second, the besieging of Q. Cicero, the brother of the great orator, and his brave resistance (chs. 38–52). Both divisions belong to the finest chapters of the entire Gallic wars. In the first we are introduced, among other things, to a very excited council of war (chs. 28–31), where two sharply opposing views are discussed with extraordinary skill and animation. The question at issue involves the escape or the destruction of a very important division of the army, and the situation is so peculiar, the conditions so complicated, each one of the two parties into which the council of war is divided contrives to support its view with so many probable reasons, that every reader will follow the debate with most absorbing interest and at the end will be himself almost in doubt whom he should agree with, until the unhappy conse-

¹ Chs. 20–36. Here is to be mentioned, among other things, the account of the standard bearer of the tenth legion (the bravest of all the legions) who at the landing leaps down with his eagle into the sea and thereby spurs on the hesitating soldiers to emulate his example.

² Worthy of note is the episode of Dumnorix, which precedes. He certainly ranks among the most interesting figures of the entire war on account of his relation to his brother and of what may be truly called his almost tragic fate. Relations similar to those between Divitiacus and Dumnorix were at that time not infrequent in Gaul. Cf. Cingetorix and Indutiomarus, son-in-law and father-in-law, but separated by political enmity. Bk. V, 3 ff.

quences of the view which finally prevails, and the destruction of the entire division with its commanders show only too plainly, but too late, which side was in the right. His interest cannot but be increased during the death struggle of the fifteen cohorts by the different behavior of the two leaders, Cotta and Sabinus. The former had in the council of war striven in vain for that plan which alone might have secured safety, and finally, in order not to make the breach irreconcilable and harmonious action thereby impossible, had yielded, contrary to his better judgment, and with the greatest self-denial submitted to the wish of his opponent, the impetuous, obstinate, and boastful Sabinus. Now, finally, when destruction is breaking in upon them and the treacherous plan of the foe is revealed, Sabinus is the first to lose his head. He rushes helplessly from cohort to cohort, and in his fear of death (which ill accords with his former language—*cf.* ch. 30—*neque is sum inquit, qui gravissime ex vobis mortis periculo terrear*, etc.), allows himself to be carried away to the most disgraceful procedure which ends in a shameful death; while Cotta at no moment loses his presence of mind, and neglects nothing that possibly might still have been able to bring help. Although seriously wounded in the face by a missile, he still remains at the head of his brave troops in the thickest turmoil of the battle, and at last, together with the greater part of the army, finds in battle a glorious death. A small handful seeks by fighting to regain the camp, from which the treachery of Ambiorix had lured them forth. Among these was the color bearer L. Petrosidius *qui cum magna multitudine hostium premeretur, aquilam intra vallum proiecit, ipse pro castris fortissime pugnans occiditur. Illi aegre ad noctem oppugnationem sustinent, noctu ad unum omnes desperata salute se ipse interficiunt.* Only some few who immediately at the beginning of the battle had sought the open space in front of the camp succeeded in making their way through the trackless forest to the nearest Roman legion, and brought the tidings of the fate of their comrades.

Still more interesting and rich in separate traits of personal bravery is the siege of Q. Cicero, for whom Ambiorix had

planned the same fate as that of these two. He, however, does not fall into the trap, but takes exactly such measures as Cotta also would have taken, if his counsel had been listened to, *cf.* ch. 41. Most celebrated also in this section, and related with dramatic liveliness, is the little episode of the two rival centurions, T. Pullo and L. Vorenus, ch. 44. Compare also besides chs. 45, 48, 51.

The sixth book is especially important for us Germans because of the description of the German country and people which is given in connection with a second crossing of the Rhine (chs. 21-28). To this description for the sake of comparison is prefixed an account of Gallic customs and conditions (chs. 11-20). This section has already been so frequently discussed that we do not need to take up the subject here. Deserving mention besides in this book is the war of annihilation against Ambiorix and the Eburones (chs. 29-43), and as an episode of this campaign a new invasion of German cavalry, which is very significant as illustrating the relation of the German races on the one side toward the Gauls and on the other toward the Romans. For instance, these troops of cavalry came actually to aid Cæsar in the destruction of the Eburones, but allowed themselves through force of circumstances to be tempted into attacking the fortified camp of Cicero. Cæsar had declared the entire people of the Eburones to be, so to say, outlaws, and to spare his own legions in the wooded and swampy country (*ut potius in silvis Gallorum vita quam miles legionarius periclitetur*, as he himself naïvely puts it), he had invited the neighbors of the Eburones to assist in the destruction of the hated race (*ut magna multitudine circumfusa . . . stirps ac nomen civitatis tollatur*). The hoped-for booty attracts countless hosts and also the cavalry of the Sugambri. These were urged by the Eburones, who had fallen into their power, to turn rather against the city Aduatuca, which was held by the Romans and filled with countless riches, where they could obtain more booty than by plundering the poor country of the Eburones. *Atque unus ex captivis, "Quid vos," inquit, "hanc miseram ac tenuem sectamini prædam,*

quibus licet iam esse fortunatissimis. Tribus horis Aduatucam venire potestis; huc omnes fortunas exercitus Romanorum contulit." The garrison of the place was said to be so weak that it was not even possible to man the walls. The Germans, to whom it was quite a matter of indifference whom they plundered, whether Gauls or Romans, did not wait a second bidding. They concealed in a safe place the booty they had so far acquired, and made all haste against Aduacuta, where, bursting suddenly forth from the woods, they caused widespread terror. The Roman merchants, who had set up their tents in front of the camp, were surprised before they could take themselves and their possessions into a place of safety, and it was only with difficulty that the cohort which was on duty before the gates resisted the first impetuous assault. Within the utmost consternation reigned. *Totis trepidatur castris, atque alius ex alio causam tumultus quaerit, neque quo signa ferantur, neque quam in partem quisque conveniat, provident. Alius castra iam capta pronuntiat, alius deleto exercitu atque imperatore* (Cæsar had in fact marched away, shortly before, with the principal division of the army, in exactly the direction from which the army came), *victores barbaros venisse contendit; plerique novas sibi ex loco religiones fingunt Cottaque et Titurii calamitatem qui in eodem occiderint castello, ante oculos ponunt.* Only through the fearlessness of P. Sextius Baculus, who had already distinguished himself in the struggle against the Alpine tribes (III, 5) and against the Nervi (II, 25), was the camp, with its rich equipment of armor, saved. Only one division of the Romans (it was composed partly of convalescents) which had been sent out on a foraging expedition, and was just then returning, was cut off by the hostile cavalry, and for the most part slain. Finally, however, the Sugambri are compelled to withdraw without accomplishing their chief object.

The seventh book is one of the richest in subject-matter. The chief interest here centers about Vercingetorix of the Arverni, under whom once more a great number of the Gallic tribes unite in a formidable alliance against the Romans, and who, by his energy and his unyielding courage, is in a high degree

worthy of our sympathy. In the struggle against Vercingetorix we find for the first time a considerable contingent of Germans in Cæsar's service, and it is by their courage also that the victory over Vercingetorix is above all due (ch. 67). After his defeat Vercingetorix withdraws to Alesia, and the siege of this city (chs. 68-90), which unquestionably belongs to the most noteworthy as well as the most familiar of the events of the Gallic War, fills the remaining portion of the seventh book.

Thus, then, we may regard the Gallic War as fulfilling also the second condition which we felt bound to impose in reference to its contents, and consider that we have demonstrated an appropriate variety of subject-matter.

So far as the language and style of Cæsar are concerned we may say that the former is recognized as classic, and we may also pass lightly over the second point, inasmuch as the highest court of appeal in the philological world has already once for all passed judgment thereon. For Cicero in his *Brutus* says of Cæsar's commentaries that they are simple, plain, full of natural charm and free from all superfluous oratorical adornment (*nudi enim sunt commentarii ornatu orationis tanquam veste detracta*), and he adds then in reference to them that there is nothing more agreeable in an historical work than a pure and lucid brevity (*nihil enim est in historia pura et illustri brevitate dulcius*). Equally favorable is the judgment of the unknown composer of the eighth book of the Gallic War. *Constat enim inter omnes nihil tam operose ab aliis esse perfectum, quod non horum elegantia commentariorum superetur. Cuius tamen rei maior nostra quam reliquorum est admiratio, ceteri enim, quam bene atque emendate, nos etiam, quam facile atque celeriter eos perfecere, scimus. Erat autem in Caesare cum facultas atque elegantia summa scribendi, tum verissima scientia*, etc. And, in fact, when we compare with these testimonies the commentaries as they now lie before us, we must concede that Cicero especially has very aptly characterized the distinguishing marks of Cæsar's style,¹ an extraordinarily clear,

¹ The Cæsarian period is distinguished less by smoothness and agreeable finish than by a logically clear arrangement. The analysis of it is, therefore, for younger

quiet, and noble style. It is, the simplicity which indeed understands adornment, but scorns it, because it is conscious to itself that, even as rich adornment upon a beautiful body may easily conceal its beauty, so also the charm of a beautiful style is to be sought in the harmony of its members, and not in ornamental accessories. In the eyes of many, indeed, it is just this "excessive" simplicity of style that condemns the book, and they call it on this account dry and tedious—a judgment which we can not pass over altogether in silence, because, in the case of a schoolbook, it is this point above all which is of great moment. An historical work that should offer nothing except a dry enumeration of occurrences, and were these occurrences ever so important or varied, and all the accounts consistent with the truth, would naturally be entirely inappropriate as a reading book for youth, since youth demands *movement, color, life*. If now, free from prejudice, we test Cæsar's commentaries from this point of view we cannot pronounce his style entirely free from the reproach of a certain dryness. We miss, indeed nowhere life and moment, but we do fail often to find the richness of color which alone gives the proper liveliness to the picture. For, if the reader is to reproduce within himself, in a vivid way, that which is depicted (and that is certainly what is desired) the necessary point of view must be presented to his imagination. This is attained, however, only by individualizing, and it is this quality that we so often miss in Cæsar. Instead, for example, of saying *diu atque acriter hoc loco pugnatum est*, he ought rather to present to us single details from the conflict which would vividly depict before our eyes the bitterness of the struggles—and so in all other cases. Now it is true that such single details are by no means lacking, and we have noted above a whole series of examples, but the number of such, in proportion to the compass of the entire work is always too

pupils an excellent training. About the principal sentence, which is usually extraordinarily simple and easily recognizable, there is grouped, as a rule, a great number of secondary and subordinate clauses. And it is of importance that the pupil should learn accurately to define their relation to the principal sentence. In translating one is very often compelled to resolve such a period into several sentences.

small, and they are themselves presented usually in a very simple and, one may say, matter-of-fact language. Likewise, for another element of description necessary to individualizing—we mean the entire external scenery, description of localities, the depicting of the characters in respect to their complete external appearance, their armor, costume, etc.—in general too little is done, at least for readers such as we here contemplate.¹ Cæsar, in fact, wrote not for youth, and for Roman readers many of these things needed no particular description. This is true among other things of the preparations for sieges, of the various engines of war, fortifications, and a hundred other things which the Roman readers knew sufficiently well from their own observation, while we are able only by artificial means to supply in a certain sense the lack of the concrete view, but are never able wholly to compensate for its want. Least of all is this possible in the case of young pupils. What, then, are we to conclude? That we shall not, therefore, read Cæsar at all with boys? That would be a premature inference. The conclusion is rather that it is necessary for the teacher by appropriate means to assist the imagination of the boy in these things, and further, indeed, it would follow from this that young pupils are qualified to read Cæsar with profit only under the guidance of a teacher, not in private. If, however, one is disposed to describe Cæsar's style as matter-of-fact merely for the reason that it is deficient in the fantastic romantic element that plays so great a rôle in modern literature, we should have to regard this deficiency rather as an advantage and as a salutary antidote to the tendency that can find good taste only in the piquant.

And with this is connected still another element of superiority in Cæsar's style which in like manner is in a higher degree peculiar to the ancients in general than to our age, namely, its objectivity. In a gentle current glide past us, so to speak, the

¹ It is only the deeds of a Cæsar or a Labienus or an Ariovistus, and their words, that a boy learns to know, their personality remains unknown to him. It is entirely different in the case of a Gustavus Adolphus, Tilly, Wallenstein (as Schiller represents him), or in the case of a Frederick II, Charles XII of Sweden, and others. Therefore, also, the interest in these cases is more lively.

events themselves without any ebullition of passion, without any admixture of feeling or reflection on the part of the narrator. This objectivity deserves recognition in Cæsar all the more because narrator and chief hero are united in the same person. In the Commentaries on the Gallic War, it is always the Cæsar who acts, never the Cæsar who narrates that we see appear.

This brings us further to the question of the credibility of Cæsar's account, which has been strongly assailed on many sides. Without undertaking a special discussion of the question, we have for our purpose to make two remarks on this subject. First, as far as the source of the assaults is concerned there is no question but that they proceed in the first instance from the well-known passage in Suetonius (*Jul. Cæs.*, ch. 56) where the author informs us that Asinius Pollio had entertained strong doubts concerning the credibility of Cæsar's commentaries, and was of the opinion that these had been composed with too little care and were not always truthful, inasmuch as Cæsar had given too ready credence to the exploits of others, and that he had incorrectly represented his own deeds, whether purposely or from a mistaken recollection. (*Pollio Asinius parum diligenter parumque integra veritate compositos—commentarios—putat, cum Caesar pleraque et quae per alios erant gesta, temere crediderit et quae per se, vel consulto vel etiam memoria lapsus perperam ediderit.*) His accusation has, in fact, a very serious ring inasmuch as it proceeds from a friend and comrade in arms, who according to several witnesses (*Velleius*, II, 63, *Cic. ad famil.*, X, 31), remained faithful to Cæsar to his death; and in whose case, therefore, it is impossible to impute this judgment to impure motives. According to this passage in Suetonius, Asinius Pollio was inclined to believe that if Cæsar had lived longer he would assuredly himself have corrected these errors (*existimat rescripturum et correcturum fuisse*). This then has led certain persons to test Cæsar's statements with an exactness born of suspicion, and to compare them with the accounts of later historians, namely, Dio Cassius and Appian; but if now we inquire after the results of this examination,

everything that can in any wise be alleged against the credibility of Cæsar is so trivial and unimportant that it hardly affects the question, and moreover, on these very points we can reach not certainty, but at the most merely some degree of probability. Second, an attempt has been made to disparage Cæsar's credibility from another point of view, namely, by reference to the circumstances under which the Gallic War was composed. Cæsar, it is said, in writing the books of the Gallic War (immediately before the outbreak of the Civil War) had unmistakably the intention to represent all his deeds in Gaul in the most favorable light possible, in order thereby to ingratiate himself in the favor of the Roman people. This conjecture has in itself nothing very improbable, only in reference to the facts recounted in the Gallic War it has lacked, hitherto, almost any degree of sure proof. Thus we are able to regard this objection also as refuted and the result of our examination may be considered to be this: that the Gallic War in respect not only to its form fulfills the demands proposed by us above and fully deserves the position which since ancient times it has maintained in our gymnasia.

And now a few words concerning the *Bellum Civile*. The significance of the Civil War we have already noted above. The *Bellum Civile* shows us, as it were, the gloomy reverse of the brilliant picture of strength and warlike might which is unfolded before us in the Gallic War. We see how the mighty empire, which externally is still growing, is within already beginning to decay, how all the internal organs of the state are diseased and, with their harmonious action interrupted, are arrayed in hostile combat against each other. But for anything more than a superficial understanding of the *Bellum Civile* there is necessary, just on that account, a greater ripeness of the judgment and above all a more intimate acquaintance not only with Roman history in general, but especially with the conditions of the state toward the close of the republic, with the organization of the government, the parties within it, with the position of the several parties and their leaders toward each other and toward the

senate, with the relations of the provinces to the capital, and with many other things besides, with which the younger pupils are usually not familiar. To this is added the complicated course of the war itself which is waged simultaneously at the most widely separated points and under the most diverse conditions, a circumstance that makes it difficult for the pupil to gain a comprehensive view of the entire situation. Moreover, besides the two chief party leaders on either side, there appear upon the scene so many subordinate commanders by land and sea, that the boy will scarce be able to keep in mind the most important of these and their position in the struggle. Finally, the language also of the *Bellum Civile* is more difficult than that of the Gallic War. All this makes it seem advisable to read the *Bellum Civile* only with the more advanced pupils (in *Unter-Sekunda* or *Ober-Tertia*). At this period, however, its use, without doubt, would be attended with preëminent advantages because in subject-matter and in form it satisfies the conditions required for a schoolbook no less than the work of the same author which we first discussed. After the foregoing it is to be hoped that no detailed proof of this will be required of us. To the most interesting portions in respect to subject matter belong, (1) The besieging of Pompeius in Brundisium, I, 25-29; (2) The campaign by land and sea against the rich and powerful Massilia, I, 36, 56-58, and II, 1-16, 22; (3) The war in Spain against Afranius and Petreius, I, 39-55, 59-87 (especially 64-73 and 74-77); (4) The war in Africa, II, 23-44 (especially 29-36); (5) The events at Dyrrhachium, III, 41-72; (6) The battle of Pharsalus, the flight and death of Pompeius, III, 87-103. The *Bellum Civile* is richer in individual characteristic scenes and brief episodes than the Gallic War.¹ In reference to the language and style essentially the same is true that was remarked above concerning the Gallic War, save only in the *Bellum Civile*, as we have already observed, the language is somewhat more difficult (the text here, too, is not so certain as in the former

¹*Cf.* I, 28, 69, 74-76; II, 5, 6, 7, 12, 14, 28, 35; III, 13, 19, 28, 49, 53, 71, 83, 87, 96, 98, 105.

case) and the style does not in the same degree as in the Gallic War bear the stamp of an objective calm, inasmuch as here the partisanship of the narrator cannot entirely efface itself. That this partisanship, however, on the other hand, is calculated in a certain degree to cast suspicion on the credibility of the narrative, we have already conceded, but we are compelled at the same time also to remark that even in the *Bellum Civile*, with the exception of one notorious case, no one hitherto has been able with certainty to establish that suspicion.

F. H. HOWARD

COLGATE ACADEMY